

The Saturday Review

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Reply to a Russian Invitation

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The editor of The Saturday Review has received a cabled official invitation from Igor Bestuzhev in Moscow for a statement on nuclear testing that would be published or broadcast in the Soviet Union. The following is the text of the reply:*

THE world's peoples prayerfully seek not only an end to nuclear testing, but an end to war, threats of war, aggressions, government-by-force, outside rule, and all the big and little tyrannies that bleed the human spirit and make it difficult for a free man to live and grow.

An enforceable ban on nuclear testing could help set the stage for the long-range, peace-building measures. Apart from this, there are grave doubts about the safety of such tests in terms of the effects on food and human tissue.

If, therefore, you ask why the American people are profoundly reluctant to enter into informal agreements, I beg you to believe that there is nothing impulsive or unnatural in these hesitations. In all honesty and good faith, I ask you to consider that the American people are fearful that the Soviet leaders might find some way of circumventing such agreements whenever it is to their advantage to do so.

There is also a growing conviction that the Soviet leaders are not so much intent on achieving nuclear arms control as they are on bringing about the failure of such negotiations and in making it appear to the world that the United States is responsible.

Indeed, ever since the question of arms control came up at the end of the Second World War, Soviet policy

seems to have had twin objectives—the one to come before the world as a champion of disarmament, the other to maneuver the United States into a position where it would be blamed for the failure of any disarmament negotiations.

A year or two ago, it appeared that a great change for the better had come about in the leadership of the Soviet Union. There was a boldness and frankness in acknowledging the misdeeds of previous leadership that gave promise of new and healthier approaches. But recent events, notably the armed intervention by Soviet troops against popular uprisings in Hungary, have revived and reinforced the sombre image of Soviet leadership.

This is not to say that America is without blame in the situation of tension in which the world finds itself today.

I believe the United States has often failed to make its purposes clear in the world. We have not adequately countered propaganda charges against us that we are intent on war.

Too much of our policy has seemed to the world to be a reaction to what the Soviet does or does not do. Not enough of our policy has consisted of worthwhile and positive ends in themselves. For example, when we have sent assistance to needy peoples, we would frequently make the mistake of relating it to military necessity instead of making it clear that we were furnishing such aid because we were in a position to do so and because it was the right thing for us to do.

Another mistake is that we have often failed to put our greatest resource to work in our relationship

with the rest of the world. I refer to the natural idealism of the American people. In our own history it has translated itself into big ideas. Today, there is a craving in the world for the big ideas that have to do with the individual's free place in a free society, and for the utilization of the world's energies for the world's good.

Still another mistake is that we have failed to dramatize the necessary distinctions between governments we may not favor and the peoples of those governments.

The American people have nothing but the warmest feelings for the Russian people.

Though we are deeply opposed to dictatorship, whatever its professed aim, we have no animus toward the human beings who live under that dictatorship. But we haven't made this distinction as visible as it should be. The result is that we may appear antagonistic to a nation as a whole.

NOW we come to the tensions between our two governments. Apart from the ideological differences between the two nations, there is a basic and historical reason for the present strain. In the very act of seeking security, each nation is contributing to the insecurity of the other. The absence of a world security system adequate to underwrite the safety of individual nations, small or large, has made it imperative for the nations to fashion their own security as best they can.

There was a basic fallacy in the way the United Nations was constituted. The fallacy was that the United Nations could not be, and should not be, anything more than a reflection of the will for the peace of the member nations themselves. The United Nations was not given a law-making status of its own, apart from that of the states. It was a collection of units rather than a unit in itself. It was not so constituted as to have a direct connection with the world's peoples and thus, in a measure, to be able to command their loyalties. It became an adjunct to the foreign policies of the individual nations. It lacked the authority and the means to prevent aggression or to guarantee the independence and essential sovereignty of the nations.

As a result, even without respect to ideological or historical differences, there was an inadequate basis for mutual security in the world at the end of the last great war. But, in the years following the war, the ideological differences asserted themselves and interacted with the race for security. It was inevitable that deep and dangerous tensions would be created.

These tensions do not exist in the world of the slingshot. The nature of

the new science of warfare is such that some way must be found, as President Eisenhower has said, to outlaw not only nuclear tests, but war itself. Bombs have already been tested by both the United States and the Soviet Union that are more than one thousand times more powerful than the atomic bombs that ended the last world war. Indeed, it is now possible to make a single hydrogen bomb that contains more explosive force than all the bombs let loose in all the wars of man put together.

Worse still is the fact that the main sufferers of a nuclear conflict will be the generations to come. For, if there should be any survivors, our legacy to the future will be poisoned genes. Those genes will cheapen human life, disfigure it, deplete it.

This is too much power for nations or peoples to have. Whatever the antagonisms in the world today, no one has the right to pursue and punish unborn generations or to tamper with the sacred nature of life.

Yet this is the position in which mankind finds itself today. We must ask ourselves then whether as members of the human family we do not all share an obligation to act in behalf of our common responsibility. We must develop new resolves and fashion great new possibilities.

No single government by itself can create the new climate of hope that is now needed. But neither are the individual governments helpless in making vital contributions toward that end.

Since Radio Moscow has asked me for a statement, I now make bold to say what I believe it is that the Soviet government can do that would have a profound effect on the American people in improving the relations between our two nations and in helping to clear the way for an effective and enduring peace.

First, call off and rescind once and for all, openly and unequivocally, the aim of world revolution and the apparatus of world revolution.

The world cannot be expected to be persuaded by professions of respect and co-existence so long as there is good reason for believing that the original Communist aim of world revolution and control is unchanged. True, the Soviet has made renunciations in this respect from time to time, but they lack the implementing proof. It has announced that the national Communist parties throughout the world are totally independent, but those parties have not acted in a manner to confirm this separation. Here in the United States, for example, the Communist Party has consistently demonstrated that it sees itself as the arm of the foreign policy of the

Soviet Union, rather than as a group primarily concerned with the welfare of the American people. Indeed, just in the act of existing, the American Communist Party has made itself repugnant to the American people. It has seriously retarded the chances for any workable and effective agreements on arms control just by propagandizing for it. Whatever this party touches becomes anathema to the masses of the American people. I say this in absolute sincerity, so that you may understand the liability it represents in the cause of American-Russian friendship.

Second, it would contribute enormously to an atmosphere of peace if the Soviet Union would announce a time-table for withdrawing its political and military influence from Central and Northern Europe and for returning to the peoples of that area their full and unfettered national independence.

If the Soviet Union feels that the present state of world insecurity requires it to hold on to Central and Northern Europe for military reasons, then it would be in order for the Soviet to announce that it is willing to relinquish its controls, direct and indirect, contingent upon the creation of a world security system adequate to protect its own frontiers.

Third, the Soviet Union can act on the basis of its stated conviction that the nuclear tests are contaminating the atmosphere. There is nothing to keep the Soviet from announcing to the world that, consistent with the health and safety of the world's peoples, it is suspending its nuclear tests and it can call upon the rest of the world to do likewise. This would be the quickest and easiest way of bringing about cessation in the United States. It would also set the stage for binding and fool-proof agreements with respect to arms reduction and arms control.

Fourth, the Soviet can announce that it is willing to forego its veto in the United Nations on those matters related to world security on condition that other nations do likewise and on condition that the United Nations be given the responsible powers that would enable it to underwrite national frontiers and national sovereignty. For whatever the present shortcomings of the United Nations, it is still the best hope we have of holding the world together.

Fifth, the Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. made an excellent move in the direction of freer communication between the two countries in appearing recently before an American television audience. Continued such accessibility to American correspond-

ents would be highly useful. It should also be made possible for American officials to talk directly to the Russian people.

YOU are right when you say that there must be at least as many points in a list of what the United States can do in the cause of making this planet safe for human habitation. I invite you or your colleagues to prepare such a list which we would endeavor to have published in full in the United States and to obtain for it appropriate attention in the United States.

Meanwhile, I am eager to assure you that this statement was prepared not for the purpose of scoring points in a debate or for seeking any advantage. It was written in the belief that it is not yet too late for the American and Russian peoples to explore honestly and frankly what has to be done to make the world safe for its diversity and to respect the rights of the generations to come.

—N. C.

The Umbrella

By Donald Hall

IT KEEPS out everything! It goes
Down to the floor, takes root and
grows,

Until it is a wooden thing
Protecting me from wind and rain
So that no element constrain
My random perfect tarrying.
It is a game of solitaire.
Like water ouzels, I protect
My body in a case of air,
While walking on the world, suspect
To all the trout for whom I seem
A foreign object in the stream.
I read in here. I see your lips
That move to answer me, but I
Am deaf to everyone's reply.
I am my own acquaintanceships.
The world is made of Indians
Whose bows and arrows have no
sense.

I live in no man's land, it's true,
But in a Sherman tank for you
To shoot at if you care to shoot
I do not give a single hoot.
Life does not scrape against my skin,
And wail, and struggle to get in.
I sacrificed my own design
To make this big umbrella mine.
I sleep much better now. The air
Is not conditioned but ignored,
Somehow as if I could afford
To breathe aromas of nowhere.
That's where I live. You hear me
shout.

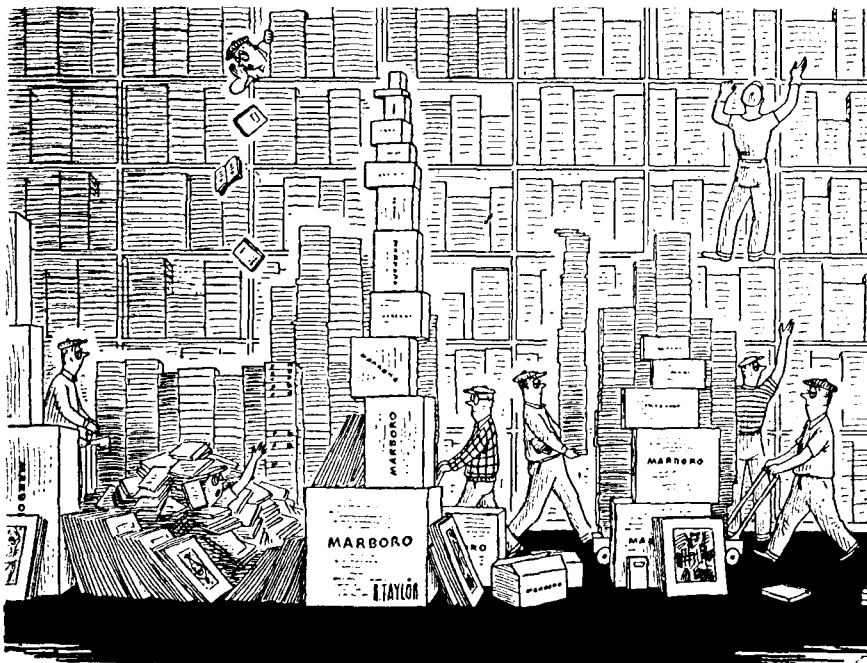
You see my inner happiness.
Your lips move. You are all a mess.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COLLECTIVE STUPIDITY

DR. WILLARD LIBBY, like many other scientists, abandons the methods of rational inquiry when he enters the realm of human affairs and "doublethinks" with the politicians (SR May 25). He apparently thinks of a less-than-Utopian agreement to ban H-bomb testing as "the terrible risk of abandoning the defense effort." The H-bomb has become a quasi-institution. Like all institutions, it is perpetuated by mental inertia. The dangers of fallout, although indeterminate, are universally recognized, while the presumed dangers of discontinuing testing are quite possibly non-existent. The only conceivable use of H-bombs is as a deterrent, and it is difficult to see how further increase in the destructive power of these already staggering weapons can materially enhance their deterrent effect. The present international tensions, which we help to create, and the tremendous extravagance of the arms race, which impedes human progress in all its constructive aspects, cannot be tolerated indefinitely. Our worst enemy may not be the Communists but the collective stupidity of mankind, which we share so abundantly with the other nations.

C. W. GRIFFIN.

Erlton, N. J.

THREAT TO HUMANITY

SR's STATED policy regarding the nuclear weapons, their testing, and their threat to humanity has, I am sure, awakened many, many individuals, over the world, in all walks of life.

ROBERT L. GOULDING, M.D.

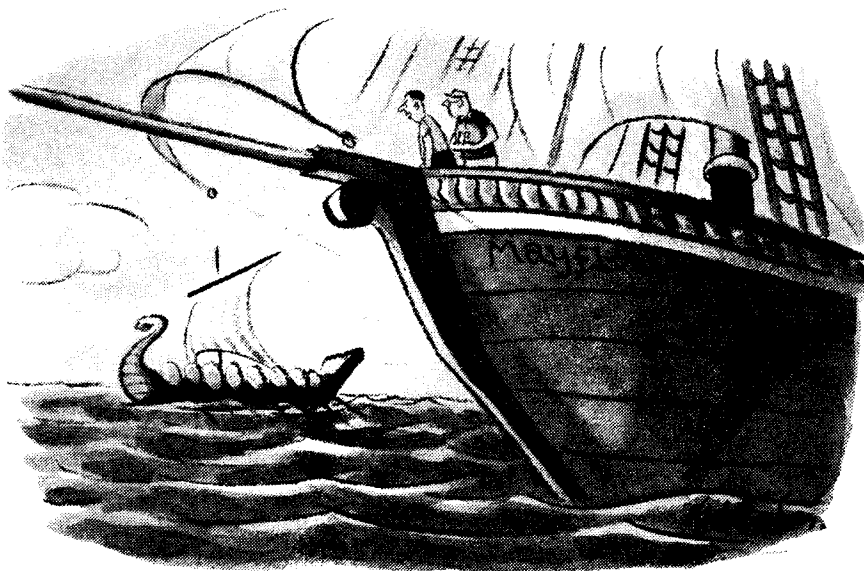
Bowman, N. D.

DOWNWARD REVISIONS

THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION has recently revised its estimate of the amount of hydrogen-bomb detonation necessary to bring the world level of radioactivity up to maximum permissible concentration. This estimate, originally 110,000 megatons, has recently been lowered to 30,000 megatons, which represents what might be involved in only a "small" nuclear war. This revision was made necessary by a preliminary survey of the amount of weapons-testing-caused radioactivity in human bones. There is little doubt in my mind but that this estimate

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"Well, I think *that's* a pretty snide gesture on Norway's part!"

will be further revised downward in the near future when the importance of the three times higher concentration in children is fully realized, and when the effect of low doses of radioactivity on the blood system has been fully explored.

ALLAN B. BURDICK,
Purdue University.

Lafayette, Ind.

HE'S NOT CONCERNED

SORRY YOU INSTIGATED the sob-sister attack on the AEC which is as the buzz of flies in the ears of a working elephant. The John Public that maintains our strong central government will be no more concerned about this attack than the elephant will be annoyed by the flies.

J. C. ELLINGTON.

Galveston, Texas.

ALL-TOO-CREDIBLE FOLLIES

IT IS BECOMING apparent that humanity is now committing a most terrifying crime: the irremediable poisoning of millions of now living men and the even more catastrophic poisoning of their children. That crime is commonly justified by another: the poisoning of the mind which blinds it to intelligent responsibility, and delivers it to the doctrine of fear which today dominates human government. We must not allow these all-too-credible follies to occur.

HUGH N. PENDLETON.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

SHALL SR STAND?

WHILE *The Saturday Review* has never posed as the arbiter of usage, its readers somehow have expected that, to protect its immense prestige, SR would respect long-established expressions, look askance at questionable neologisms, and deliberately refuse to give a fillip to the

disintegrating tendencies that, for better or worse, characterize all languages: in down-to-earth plainness, to remain conservative, an overall stabilizing force, but open to the occasional changes that broadly accepted usage imperatively commends. The great Roman critic, Quintilian, once wrote that "even the great Homer sometimes nods." Was John Mason Brown, a critic for whom I have profound respect, guilty of "nodding" when, in SR June 1, he ignores the age-old distinction between *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would*? He writes: "We would be a poor breed indeed, if we permitted fear to stampede us into mistaking possibilities for certainties." Authorities who respect the genius of Anglo-Saxon forms have insisted that *shall* in the first person and *will* in the second and third express simple futurity, while *will* in the first person and *shall* in the second and third person denote volition or determination on the part of the speaker. The distinction also applies to the contingent forms of *should* and *would*. Inasmuch as mere willing could not prevent a stampede, it appears that Mr. Brown ought to have used the word *should*. Again he writes: "I trust we will have outgrown our lust for the mediocre," and "I trust we will not have lost our gift for laughter, or our ability to be outraged by wrong." Mere willing on our part can have no assurance that the desired ends will be attained, so the genius of the language demands the use of *shall* in each sentence.

With genuine regret I admit that there are millions who appear indifferent to the vital distinction between *shall* and *will*, perhaps would like to see all distinctions wiped out. My contention is that *The Saturday Review* should not add a downward push toward oblivion for these distinctive words.

LABAN LACY RICE.

Orlando, Fla.